

Public Involvement at the Savannah River Site

Public involvement is critical to the success of the Savannah River Site Environmental Dose Reconstruction Project. Dose reconstruction requires a level of commitment to public interaction not encountered in most scientific studies. Scientists performing the research combine technical rigor and credibility with open and responsive communication with interested individuals and groups.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its contractor Radiological Assessments Corporation (RAC) scientists are dedicated to encouraging the involvement of key stakeholders in the study. Researchers spend many hours interacting with concerned citizens and workers via workshops, meetings, roundtable discussions, and other opportunities. It is our belief that early and effective stakeholder involvement is crucial to the success of the study.

Stakeholders

Affected community and worker populations and state, local, and tribal governments.

Public Meetings, Workshops, and Press Briefings

Phase II public meetings, workshops, and press briefings are designed both to inform the public and to solicit feedback and suggestions for the work. These meetings are publicized through mailings to individuals on the project mailing list; press releases distributed to newspapers, television and radio stations; announcements in *Dose Reconstruction News*, the quarterly project newsletter; and through published notices in the *Federal Register*. CDC generally holds public meetings on a quarterly basis. Meeting locations are varied among the communities surrounding SRS in South Carolina and Georgia. Every effort is made to hold these meetings in familiar locations with complimentary parking for the convenience of the public and the press.

Meetings consist of a project overview for new attendees, a status update on specific aspects of Phase II, and a period for public questions, comments, and suggestions. Visual aids, such as overheads and computer demonstrations, are used during the meetings to enhance the technical presentations. A mailing list sign-up sheet, a

meeting participant survey form, past issues of project newsletters, and fact sheets are made available to attendees at each of the meetings.

CDC conducts three different types of meetings for public involvement. These include: 1) general public meetings; 2) informational workshops; and 3) roundtable discussion groups. All of these meetings are open to the public, but each attracts individuals with different interests in the project. The general public meetings provide a forum for individuals to learn about the progress of the project, to voice their concerns, and to provide leads for discovering relevant information. The informational workshops give individuals and small groups the opportunity to discuss the more technical details of a particular topic with project scientists. Roundtable discussions begin with a brief presentation by one of the scientists, followed by separation into small groups to discuss issues raised and identify public concerns.

Newsletters

The purpose of the project newsletter, *Dose Reconstruction News*, is to keep the public informed of the status of the project. Newsletters are used to address questions and concerns of the public and to briefly summarize discussions held during workshops and public meetings. Newsletters are distributed to individuals and organizations included on the SRS project mailing list. Those wishing to be added to the newsletter distribution list or to request past newsletter issues may contact Radiological Assessments Corporation, 417 Till Road, Neeses, SC 29107 (800-637-4766).

Newsletter Topics	Volume
Phase II of SRS Dose Reconstruction Projects Begins: Estimating past releases; Identifying release pathways; How will so much information be stored; Evaluating environmental information; Clarifying ranges for uncertainty; and So many chemicals - A method to evaluate SRS chemical releases	Vol. I, No. 1
A Piece of the Grand Design - SRS Demographic Database and Geographic Information System: Demographic database; Categories of information; Geographic information system; Collecting data; and Release estimates expected to differ	Vol. I, No. 2
Evaluating SRS Environmental Monitoring, Data: Where and when are effluent and environmental monitoring data collected?; How will the environmental monitoring data be gathered in Phase II of the Project?; What types of data support the dose reconstruction project?; Why are environmental monitoring data so important?; What are some of the difficulties of using environmental monitoring data?; and How will the data be evaluated?	Vol. I, No. 3
Estimates of Releases from the Savannah River Site: Release categories; Examining releases that are most important; Best estimates sought; Time histories will be prepared; Uncertainties to be estimated; Methods of estimating releases; Searches for original records; and Comparisons with environmental data	Vol. I, No. 4
Selecting the Savannah River Site Study Area: Available information and accuracy of estimates; Measurements in the body; Measurements in the environment; Measurements at the points of release; Doses decrease with distance; and Recommended study area	Vol. II, No. 1

Fact Sheets

Fact Sheets are prepared when new information becomes available or in response to public concerns. They are designed to provide the public with a better understanding of the dose reconstruction process through definitions of commonly used scientific terms and descriptions of key processes or concepts.

Fact Sheet Topics	Volume
Source Term Estimates: Types of releases; and Source term estimates	No. 1
Radiation in our Environment: Natural sources; Manmade sources; Current breakdown of average doses received in 1 year; and Typical radiation exposures	No. 2
Environmental Exposure Pathways: Environmental pathways; Food chain; Exposure assessment; and Food pathway factors	No. 3
Glossary of Dose Reconstruction Terms	No. 4
Accessing and Declassifying Historical Records: Access to historical records; Classification of records; Declassification of historical records; Public access to project records; Categories of classified information; Levels of classified information; Why some secrets remain; and Public participation	No. 5
Tritium & SRS Offsite Releases - An Update: Tritium production and releases at SRS; The relative hazard of tritium; Tritium releases seen via monitoring records; and Monitoring tritium releases to water	No. 6
Plutonium at the Savannah River Site: History of the Savannah River Site; Studying SRS operations; Characteristics of plutonium; Health studies; and Dose and risk from plutonium	No. 7

Working With the Savannah River Site Health Effects Subcommittee (SRSHES)

CDC and RAC scientists keep the Savannah River Site Health Effects Subcommittee informed by giving presentations on the study's progress at quarterly meetings, and by providing other materials as requested. In addition, the Subcommittee is given the opportunity to review and comment on all draft reports produced during Phase II, and to make recommendations concerning the direction of the study. SRSHES members also participate in public meetings and workshops.

Education and Outreach Activities

CDC and RAC scientists have established working relationships with instructors at several colleges and universities in the SRS region, including the University of South Carolina in Aiken, Savannah State College in Savannah, The University of South Carolina in Columbia, the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, and Emory University in Atlanta. Scientists have supported university requests for project information by: 1) public or university presentations at or near these institutions; 2) establishing the Phase I database at the DOE reading room at USC Aiken and at Savannah State College; 3) mailing diskette copies of the database to a number of schools, organizations, and individuals; and 4) supporting a student tour of research facilities at SRS.

Researchers use the Phase I database to support education and outreach activities because it is a unique research tool for college staff and students. It represents the first comprehensive historical records review of a major weapons facility, with all documents declassified and available for offsite use.

Project Mailing List

The Project mailing list is used for the distribution of meeting announcements, newsletters, and notice of the issuance of Phase II reports. It includes names collected from sign-up sheets used at public meetings held during Phases I and II of the SRS project, and of individuals and organizations requesting information on the study.

Citizen Input and Evaluation

Following public workshops or meetings, CDC and RAC evaluate results, summarize the material presented, and list comments and criticisms offered by attendees. Citizen response is monitored through the distribution of participant survey forms at each public meeting. The information obtained via these forms allows scientists to rate the effectiveness of the meetings and make adjustments as Phase II progresses. To request information on the project or talk with one of the scientists, citizens may contact Radiological Assessments Corporation, 417 Till Road, Neeses, SC 29107 (800-637-4766).

An Open, Public Process

Public input is critical to this project. We encourage your input and attendance at public meetings to stay informed on the progress of the research. Public meetings continue to be held in areas near the SRS and are announced in our newsletters.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Radiological Assessments Corporation, and South Carolina State University scientists wish to provide clear and accessible information to the public. Newsletters and fact sheets will be published regularly to provide updates on the progress of the research. Detailed technical information, including copies of the Phase I database describing research material discovered through June 1995, is available upon request.

Addresses for inquiries and comments are located below. Individuals with information related to the study are encouraged to call the SRS Dose Reconstruction Project toll-free number, 800-637-4766.



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***If you have information or inquiries
related to the study, please contact:***

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